B-PTAs:

(i) Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)

(ii) GSTP

(iii) India-Afghanistan PTA

(iv) India-MERCOSUR PTA

(v) India-Chile PTA

(vi) India-Thailand Framework Agreement

(c) All bilateral FTAs and PTAs are expected to boost bilateral trade by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Trade between Pakistan and India through land route

2498. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a scope for tremendous boost of trade between Pakistan and India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that most of the items are traded with Pakistan through sea route *via* Gujarat and Maharashtra ports; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to enhance the list of items that can be traded through land route at Attari border in Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir, there is a scope for boost of trade between India and Pakistan. This is evident from the analysis of the bilateral trade data during 2003-04 to 2006-07 given below:

(*Value: In US $ Million*)

Year	Exports to Pak	Imports from Pak	Total Trade	%Age Growth in Export to Pakistan	%Age Growth in import	%Growth in Bilateral Trade
2003-04	286.94	57.74	344.68	39	29	
2004-05	521.05	94.97	616.02	82	64	79
2005-06	689.23	179.56	868.79	32	89	41
2006-07	1348.32	323.19	1671.51	96	80	92

DATA SOURCE: DGCI & S through NIC DOC

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) On surface route India's trade with Pakistan is carried out through Attari Railway route. For trade by road route Attari Land Customs Station (LCS) on Indian side is already a notified LCS for bilateral trade for all commodities on a permanent basis, whereas Pakistan

is yet to notify Wagah on their side for trade on all goods on a permanent basis. In May, 2005 Pakistan opened Wagah LCS for import of selected commodities from India like live animals, halal meats, onion, potato, tomato and garlic which is still operative. During the Composite Dialogue in August, 2005, Indian side requested Pakistan to open this land route on a permanent basis for enhancing the bilateral trade. Pakistan noted the request and stated that they were studying the infrastructural and administrative implications of opening of land route on permanent basis. Developing the infrastructure at Attari is a priority project in the India's proposed Integrated Check Posts Project. During the last round of Composite Dialogue in August, 2007 both sides briefed the state of infrastructure and proposed plan for development on each side. Back to back movement of trucks for loading and unloading became operational from at Attari-Wagah land Custom Stations since October, 2007. Other measures for improving infrastructure at Attari on the Indian side are also being considered.

MIR in States

2499. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the Government is planning to sanction Manufacturing Investment Region (MIR) in some States;

(b) if so, the details in this regard with the names of States where MIR likely to be setup; and

(c) whether Government will consider granting financial assistance for setting up of MIR in Punjab also and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (c) Setting up of the Manufacturing Investment Regions (MIRs) in the country is one of the initiatives to encourage manufacturing. The proposal is at a conceptual stage and no framework/draft policy has been formulated so far. Proposal to set up MIR in Punjab has been received.

Continuous increase in price of cement

2500. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a continuous increase in the price of cement during the last two years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the reasons behind this price increase has been making of cartel by the cement companies; and

(c) whether Government will consider to constitute some Regulating Agency to control this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (c) The prices of cement increased sharply between December, 2005 and March, 2007 due to mismatch between demand and supply. The Government took a number